

## **2. Remarks Comprising a Response to Restriction Requirement**

### **2.1 Remarks on Amendment to the Claims**

Initial claims 46-49 have been cancelled and new claims 53-58 have been introduced in lieu thereof wherein the artificial skin of initial claims 46 and 47 has been now claimed in new claims 53 and 54 and rendered dependent from the composite product as defined in claim 9, by rendering them dependent from claim 43.

Similarly, for the in vitro method of claims 48 and 49, which are now reformulated as new claims 55-58, they have been rendered dependent either from the composite product as defined in claim 1 or the composite product as defined in claim 9.

### **2.2 Response to Restriction Requirement with Traverse**

Applicants reserve the right to file a divisional application prior to grant of this application for the subject matter of initial claims 46-49 which have been cancelled by the present amendment.

Applicants elect Group I, claims 1-45 with traverse as follows:

The Examiner has issued a Restriction Requirement under 35 U.S.C. § 121 setting forth that one invention of Group I comprises claims 1-45 drawn to a composite product, a method of manufacture of the composite product and an artificial skin comprising the composite product as defined either in claim 1 or in claim 9 (claims 42-45 for the artificial skin).

The Examiner has taken the position that the initial wording of claims 46 and 47 relates to a distinct invention and constitutes a Group II.

Initial claims 46 and 47 have been cancelled rendering moot this objection. Further, the newly introduced claims 53 and 54 are now reformulated to be similar to claims 44 and 45 which are considered to relate to a unitary invention and pertain to Group I.

Accordingly, it is clear that new claims 53 and 54 pertain to Group I.

Initial claims 48 and 49 have been cancelled and new claims 55-58 have been introduced in lieu thereof rendered dependent either from the composite product as defined in claim 1 or from the composite product as defined in claim 9.

In view of this, they also relate to a single invention of Group I, which essentially comprises the composite product as defined either in claim 1 or in claim 9 and have to pertain to Group I.

As regards Group IV, claims 50-52 there are drawn to a method of reconstructing damage areas of skin in vivo using the artificial skin comprising the composite collagen support as defined in claim 1 or claim 9.

Accordingly, they clearly relate to a single invention which lies in the composite product as defined either in claim 1 or in claim 9 and which pertains to Group I.

Accordingly, claims 50-52 have also to pertain to Group I.

In view of the above, the traverse made by Applicants are believed to be proper and all now pending claims 1-45, 50-52 and 53-56 pertain to Group I and examination on the merits is respectfully solicited on all these claims.

Respectfully submitted,

MERCHANT & GOULD P.C.  
P.O. Box 2903  
Minneapolis, Minnesota 55402-0903  
(612) 332-5300

Date: 12-21-01

J. J. Gresens  
John J. Gresens  
Reg. No. 33,112  
JJG:PSTkaw

